Jesus said ... 
“"I am the resurrection and the life. 
Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die. 
Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. 
Do you believe this?"

John 11:25-26  CEB
Another phrase that reflects what a connectional church such as ours is all about. It affirms and celebrates the stronger and bigger mission and ministry we can accomplish as a connectional church. It also points to the mandate of unity for Christian witness as it sums up the spirit and the focus of Jesus’ prayer for the oneness of his disciples. In the Gospel of John chapter 17, Jesus repeats these words of prayer: “They may be one as we are one”.

Prayer connects the people of faith to God’s way and God’s future. Prayer is an unequivocal expression of faith that, no matter what we go through, we put our trust in God and we know that God is in charge. In sync with the ardent prayer of Jesus for oneness, each year we will lift up a prayer that we offer at the Lord’s Table as a theme:

2017-18 - “Better Together: Make Us One”
2018-19 - “Better Together: One with Christ”
2019-20 - “Better Together: One with Each Other”
2020-21 - “Better Together: One in Ministry to All the World”

I believe that God has plans to give our church hope and a future. I excitingly anticipate what God has in store for the Susquehanna Annual Conference.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace as we trust in God, so that we may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Romans 15:13)

With You in Christ’s Ministry, Bishop Jeremiah J. Park
Join us in March for General Conference Prayer and Informational Sessions. These identical sessions will be held in every district and are designed to equip clergy and laity with the resources to respond to their congregations on some of the issues being discussed at General Conference. Prayer is a central part of our gathering. We will intentionally pray for our church, our delegates, and to seek God's yearning for the United Methodist Church. Please register so we can be fully prepared. You are welcome to attend any of the sessions in any district.

**Saturday, March 14**
10:00 am  
Mt. Nittany  
1500 E Branch Rd  
State College, PA 16801

2:00 pm  
First Hollidaysburg  
801 Allegheny St  
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

**Sunday, March 15**
10:00 am  
First Mansfield  
67 E Wellsboro St  
Mansfield, PA 16933

3:00 pm  
Christ Selinsgrove  
145 Disciple Dr  
Selinsgrove, PA 17870

6:30 pm  
Linglestown Life  
1430 N Mountain Rd  
Harrisburg, PA 17112

**Saturday, March 21**
2:00 pm  
First UMC Chambersburg  
225 S 2nd St  
Chambersburg, PA 17201

**Sunday, March 22**
3:00 pm  
Clarks Summit  
1310 Morgan Hwy  
South Abington Township, PA 18411

Register at susumc.org/gc
News From Bishop Jeremiah Park

Grace to you in the name of Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, Healer of our Brokenness, and Hope of the World!

Shares of Ministry Paid in Full
January 16, 2020

“How can I thank my God enough for you in return for all the joy that I have before our God because of you?” (1Thessalonians 3:9)

As I write this to you, my heart is full of joy, gratitude and thanksgiving for you and all of the congregations of the Susquehanna Conference. Your generosity and sacrificial giving make it possible to share the Good News with the world that God loves them and cares for them as we continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. As your Bishop, I am honored to tell you that once again, the Susquehanna Conference has been able to pay our General Church Shares of Ministry in full for 2019!

Honoring our Shares of Ministry means that the churches of the Susquehanna Conference join hands with churches around the world so that we can do much more together than we ever could do alone. Your support for the World Service Fund serves, transforms, and saves countless lives locally, nationally, and globally. The fund for Africa University helps to transform Africa through the training and education of Christian leaders and pastors who are sent out to all parts of Africa to serve Jesus Christ. In this country part of the funds are being used towards our commitment to raise up church leaders to be a vital presence in the world. The Ministerial Education Fund not only goes to support the work of seminaries and seminarians, 25% of what we give to the fund stays in our Annual Conference. Your support of the Black College Fund offers hope for a better future to so many. Through your generosity of giving, each of you as part of the United Methodist connection is able to work in partnership with ecumenical agencies to bear witness to our common Christian Faith. I could go on and on about all the ways your sacrificial giving is making a difference in the world. Truly, we are “Better Together” especially in ministry to all the world!

I understand that there are more demands and competing voices for your giving, which makes your gifts and sacrifices even more special. You continue to hear the call of God for mission and ministry and respond with such faithful stewardship for such a time as this. Indeed, you have been generous beyond all measure in your giving! I cannot thank my God enough for you and the congregations of the Susquehanna Conference. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thanks be to God for you!

I hope that you will share my gratitude with your congregation.

Appointive Cabinet Changes
January 26, 2020

I want to share with you a new transition of the Appointive Cabinet. After some deep conversations and with much prayer and discernment, I am announcing that District Superintendent Larry Leland will be the lead pastor of Faith United Methodist Church, Montoursville PA, effective July 1, 2020.

Rev. Larry Leland has faithfully served the Lewisburg District with distinction since July 1, 2016. The clergy and laity under Larry’s supervision and pastoral care have been richly blessed by his outstanding gifts and graces. His presence, leadership and ministry as a District Superintendent have made a positive impact and brought transformation to many congregations and church leaders in the district and beyond.

Larry has been an intricate part of the Cabinet team. His contribution to the Cabinet with his talent of administration and serving as Cabinet secretary has been significant. He will be greatly missed.

Though Larry has been fruitful in superintending ministry, his love and heart is in the local church. He has expressed a strong calling to return to a local church as pastor and was led that this is the right time. As Larry had done it so effectively before, his serving as pastor of Faith Church will continue to bless the church, the Montoursville community and the larger mission field.

I covet your prayers for Larry, his wife Barb, his son Henry, the Lewisburg District, and the Faith UMC congregation as they go through this transition.

May God continue to richly bless and honor all of us as we serve our beloved church with faithfulness for such a time as this.

New Lewisburg DS Announced
February 16, 2020

I would like to announce that the Rev. Dr. Gary Weaver will be appointed as District Superintendent of the Lewisburg District effective July 1, 2020.

Rev. Weaver graduated from Lycoming College with a BA in 1996 and Eastern Baptist Seminary in 1999 where he received his MDiv. He earned his DMin from Wesley Theological Seminary in 2011.

Rev. Weaver is currently serving as the Lead Pastor for Camp Hill United Methodist Church where he has served since 2018. Under his pastoral and spiritual leadership Camp Hill continues to thrive in ministry and expand its mission locally and globally. Prior to serving Camp Hill, Rev. Weaver served Bloomsburg
of Equipping Vital Congregations. Gary and Cindy have two sons, Isaac and Aaron. Aaron is married to Mary and they have two children, Rose Ellen and Isaac.

Please join me in praying for the Camp Hill congregation and the Lewisburg District, as well as Gary, Cindy, and the family in this time of transition. May the gifts and graces that Gary will bring to his new role help our church enhance God’s reign for such a time as this.

New Director of Connecting Ministries
February 27, 2020

I am glad to announce that the Rev. Victoria Rebeck will be the Director of Connecting Ministries of the Susquehanna Conference. Her ministry with our Annual Conference will begin on March 16th, 2020.

Rev. Rebeck comes to our conference with a wealth of skills and experience for such a time as this. She has been involved in all levels of the United Methodist Church. She has served on Conference staff in her home conference in Minnesota. While serving on the extended cabinet, she led the communication strategy for the Minnesota Conference. In addition, as a Deacon in full connection, Victoria served as co-chair of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. She earned a Master of Theological Studies from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and she holds a Bachelor of Science degree in journalism from Northwestern University.

Rev. Rebeck also served for six years on the staff of the United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry as Director of Deacon Ministry Development, Provisional Membership Support, and Certification programs. Her experience also includes working as the Assistant Editor for the United Methodist Publishing House where she worked on the 2000 Advance and Daily Christian Advocates, the Book of Discipline, and Newscope. She has worked at every General Conference since 2000 and was elected a delegate to the 2008 General Conference.

With her vast and varied experiences in the United Methodist Church, Victoria brings significant resources to the Susquehanna Conference as we continue to strive to fulfill the conference mission of growing spiritual transformational leaders, equipping vital congregations and creating new places for new people, and connecting with each other and the world. Keenly aware of the times in which we live as a denomination, Victoria also brings with her a spirit of collegiality, a creative approach to ministry, and a collaborative engagement in ministry together with others, so that the Susquehanna Conference can continue to live to fully embody the beloved community of disciple-making congregations.

Please join me in welcoming Rev. Victoria Rebeck and praying for her smooth transition and most rewarding ministry in our conference. I am confident that her presence and leadership among us will be a rich blessing to our church as we serve our beloved church together to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In Ministry with You,
Jeremiah J. Park

Rev. Gary Weaver
Rev. Victoria Rebeck
Wesley, Hershey First, Red Lion St. Paul’s Chapel, Lawrenceville Calvary, Warrensville and Heilmans, Bethel and Mill Creek.

Gary has a heart for shepherding as he so faithfully follows the Good Shepherd. His care for people comes from his deep spirituality as he seeks to walk the walk. He is an excellent listener who is open to persons of diverse backgrounds and theological perspectives. He also has a proven gift of administrative leadership as he is completing his second quadrennia as Chair of the Committee on Conference Sessions. Gary was elected a delegate to the 2020 Jurisdictional Conference and is the second clergy alternate delegate for 2020 General Conference.

During this time of cabinet transitions, I give thanks to God for the discernment that Rev. Gary Weaver shall serve as District Superintendent. As a gifted and grace-filled pastor and effective and experienced servant leader, as well as a talented preacher, teacher, and administrator Gary will do well in his new role. His leadership and ministry for the district as well as his presence at the Cabinet table will enable Gary to use his gifts to help us live out our Conference mission to Grow, Equip, and Connect to embody the beloved community of disciple making congregations.

Gary’s wife Cindy is serving as Conference Secretary and Administrative Assistant to the Office of Equipping Vital Congregations.
ChangeMakers is coming soon!

Senior High Youth are invited to be ChangeMakers through our highly interactive immersion experience at Wesley Forest from June 28 – July 2, 2020. This experience is designed for young people to learn more about how they are wired for leadership. Youth will learn aspects of leadership and discern where their gifts can meet a true need. Each participant will design a leadership initiative to take back to their local church or community, as well as participate in much that Wesley Forest has to offer for fun, nature, and worship.

A special covenant between the young people, their congregation, and the Young Clergy Initiative (YCI) will be in place to support the participants through the ChangeMakers event and the follow-up leadership initiative. This is a powerful opportunity for local churches to live out a culture of call for your young people and help them develop as leaders. Local United Methodist Congregations are being asked to recruit one to three young people who exhibit gifts for leadership. The church provides $250 support for participation. (There are limited scholarships for local churches who would find this to be a true hardship). The young people will contribute $50, and the YCI grant funds will undergird the remaining costs of the experience and training. Each local church leadership team will also covenant to find ways to actively support the young person’s leadership initiative with enthusiasm and encouragement when they return home! Participants will also be invited to join a Continuous Learning group with peers and a coach for 6 months following ChangeMakers.

YCI hopes to encourage young people to explore God’s call to vocational leadership as a layperson or clergyperson, however this experience is also geared to help young people to sense God’s guidance on living as Spiritual transformational leadership every day and everywhere they go, as disciples of Jesus Christ!

Please contact Kim Shockley (KShockley@susumc.org) for more information and instructions on how your local church can register your youth. This year’s experience will be limited to the first 75 youth who are registered. You will also be provided with a supportive covenant that will undergird this experience between the young person and their local congregation. This immersion experience is being planned by the Growing Spiritual Transformational Leader Team in cooperation with Ministry Incubators and the Young Clergy Initiative!

This is an amazing opportunity for young people. Please, give this gift of leadership development for your youth and register today! Preparing young leaders is absolutely essential to the present and future of our shared mission and ministry together.
Equipping Vital Congregations

The Sacred Movements of Starting New Churches: An Update on Our Newest Congregations

GARY SHOCKLEY
Director of Equipping Vital Congregations

“My job was to plant the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. The ones who do the planting or watering aren’t important, but God is important because he is the one who makes the seed grow. We work together as partners who belong to God.”
I Corinthians 3:6-9 NLT

Church planting is a vital expression of ministry if we are to reach new people with the good news of Jesus Christ. Remember, your church was once a new church plant. With love, commitment to God, and self-sacrifice, church planting pioneers created new communities of faith as expressions of Christ’s presence in the world.

Starting new churches remains our best strategy for reaching new people in new places. But here’s the thing—church planting IS a high-risk venture, with all the unpredictable characteristics of pioneering into unchartered territory, but not nearly as risky as sitting on the sidelines doing little to reach new people with the Good News of Christ. Every church, new and established, is called to follow in the footsteps of Paul, Christianity’s first church planter, to engage new people in faith and discipleship.

Recently, three new churches were launched in our annual conference. The Journey in Harrisburg was planted out of a merger of participating congregations. Under the pastoral leadership of Kris Sledge and Deb Port, The Journey has demonstrated success in reaching new people in the city of Harrisburg resulting in a current average worship attendance of 84 people. This past year, The Journey has received 19 new members and has 9 small groups meeting weekly with a combined average of 46 people. The Journey has created vital partnerships with the Harrisburg School District, sponsored community events that enabled members to interact with hundreds of residents, and on several occasions led members out of the building and into the streets to knock on doors, pray with neighbors, and invite them to participate in church-sponsored events. This new multi-ethnic community of faith is having a great ministry influence in the city. Funding for this project has come mainly from the merger of participating congregations and the sale of closed properties. We thank God for God’s grace in growing seeds that are being planted in faith. Your continued prayers for The Journey are appreciated. “God is the one who makes the seed grow. We work together as partners who belong to God.” Visit: thejourneyharrisburg.org

The Valley is our second new church initiative planted in State College under a parachute-drop model. In this model, an area for ministry engagement is identified, a person is selected, assessed and trained to be the planter, he/she is given resources to start something new from scratch, and typically without a partnering church. They “parachute in” and get to work. For this project the planter, Tim Parker, was given financial support, coaching and resourcing through the Equipping Vital Congregations Office with the goal to build relationships that would yield a leadership team and then a launch team that would engage the wider area.

The Valley project included a gifted church planter doing all the right things, with the right mix of resources and coaching support, and generous financial backing from the conference. Even with our best efforts, the project has struggled to meet the benchmarks set to measure effective growth in attendance, small group development and internal financial viability. In ongoing conversation with the District Superintendent, the Equipping Vital Congregations Director, the project coach and church planter Tim Parker, the unanimous decision was recently made to discontinue this project by the end of May. Tim will be reappointed to a new ministry setting and conversations will continue with the small gathering of people aligned with The Valley to help them discern next steps in their spiritual journey. These kinds of endings are never easy and, we fear, misunderstood by those who have not been involved in the daily work of this ministry or the direction of this project. It is wise to acknowledge that church planting, especially in this model, is very difficult and doesn’t always unfold in the way intended. As people of faith we believe nothing is ever wasted in God’s hands. Though we may not see the fruits of our labor we know it is God who continues the work among those who have been involved and who will move forward on new paths of faith enriched by what they have learned and the blessings of their time with The Valley.

“And I am certain that God, who began the good work in you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.” Philippians 1: 6 NLT

We invite you to be in prayer for Tim and his wife Sasha and for all the leaders and participants of The Valley as they move into a time of discernment and transition. Visit: thevalleysc.org

Our third church plant, The Open Door, was launched as an extension church planting model where, in order

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8
participate in the campus community, friendship, service, and spiritual growth opportunities. Please provide contact information for your young adults attending any of the schools listed below, so they can contact and build relationships with your students while they are attending school.

These Campus Ministry leaders are genuine, loving, and inviting. It can be a great blessing for students to have a community on campus who cares about them. Please contact the folks listed below, if you have students at these colleges or universities. Thank you!! We are all in this together to support our young adults away at school.

Lycoming and Penn Colleges, contact Mitch Marcello – mmarcello@firstchurch.cc
Wesley Foundation @ Penn State University, contact Sarah Voigt – svoigt.Wesley@gmail.com
Bloomsburg University, contact Rev Jill Young - jyoung@bloomu.edu
Lock Haven University, contact Pastor Elizabeth Taylor – etaylor@susumc.org
Pennsylvania College of Technology (Penn College), contact Tammey Aichner, ucm@uclc.org
Shippensburg University, contact Rev. Jan Bye – jmbye@ship.edu
Mansfield University, contact Mara Wilcox – mwilcox@mansfield.edu
Dickinson College, contact Donna Hughes – hughesdo@dickinson.edu
Albright College, contact Rev. Dr. Mel Sensenig – msensenig@albright.edu
Lebanon Valley College, contact Daniel Lebo - dlebo@lvc.edu

Please take a few minutes to send a notes of encouragement and information to the Campus Minister or Chaplain who is there to care for the spiritual needs of your student!

to reach new people, an existing congregation (Calvary Dillsburg) decided to start a new congregation with staff and facility to extend ministry to a specific population group. The Open Door is primarily reaching college aged and young adult people in the wider Dillsburg area. The worship style is more contemporary and led by a dynamic team of adults under the age of 30. The team leading this initiative is in the midst of holy experimenting, relationship building and faith formation as they are committed to small group development, mission projects and community engagement that speaks to young adults in ways that are intended to widen the circle of participation in the life of this church. Attendance growth has been slow and new strategies for reaching their target population group are being explored. This particular model of church planting is less expensive and less risky than the parachute drop model because an existing congregation provides support, facilities and resources supplemented by conference and district funding. We remain hopeful and prayerful for the seeds being planted by church planter Chrisanna Rogers and her team as they participate with the Spirit to grow and produce fruit for the kingdom. Your continued prayers for their efforts are appreciated. Visit: opendoordillsburg.com.

Again, church planting is challenging and requires a willingness to take a risk, but it is an essential strategy in reaching new people in new places with the good news of Jesus Christ.

My friend Dr. Elaine Heath offers us a faithful stance for engaging in new things: we need to show up with our best thoughts, prayers, intentions and resources; we need to pay attention to where God is and what God wants to do in and through us; we need to participate fully in God’s work even if it comes with great risk and cost; and in the end we release the outcome to God, whatever it may be, knowing the work is God’s who sees what we are not able to see. God is the one who makes the seeds grow often times exceeding our imaginations. We accept that not everything we do will succeed in the way we intended. We learn from our experiences. We celebrate the times when the vision grows to full bloom and a new church widens the circle of God’s embrace. We are grateful for all who say “yes” to this journey. Let us pray for one another as we continue to serve together as partners in God’s work.
Upon arriving at Christ Community United Methodist Church, Selinsgrove, in 2012, Rev. Randall “Randy” Bennett, Jr., discovered the church did not have a vision statement. He set to work right away with a Visioning Team and soon they were committed to Connect (with God and Each Other through Worship and Fellowship); Commit (to Growing Deeper in Relationship with Jesus Christ through Discipleship and Service); and Create (Opportunities for Evangelism for Others to Know the Love of Jesus Christ) — in order to fulfill the mission of Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.

The momentum continued. A strategic plan, approved by the church in 2015, determined a need for building improvements in order to better equip them for mission. They began to align their missions and ministries with the new vision and with much prayer and discernment, they started to “Re-Imagine” the future, envisioning renovations and expansions.

“Our diversity as a congregation is that we are multi-generational. Partnering with each ministry and generational group over the course of a year to gather input and refine our vision was pivotal in the success of this project,” said Bennett.

“A Capital Campaign was launched during Lent in 2019 with a “Legacy” sermon series about Sacrifice, Prayer, Gratitude, Faith and Celebration. The congregation created and followed a 40-day Lenten devotional on each week’s theme. The campaign goal was $750,000. Pledges-to-date exceed $870,000!

Building and renovation plans were presented at the October 2019 church conference and the Re-Imagine project was unanimously approved. A groundbreaking service was held Sunday, February 2, and construction began on February 3, 2020. “It’s been really exciting to see it all come together from the visioning, to ideas, to plans, to shovels hitting the ground,” said Apanel.

Those conversations revealed the need to refresh and renovate existing spaces and optimize them for better use and more ministry possibilities. There was also a need for expansion due to growth in both church membership and the youth ministry. “We have added 150 new members to our congregation since 2012,” shared Bennett. “More than half of those have been by profession of faith, including adult baptisms, and the majority of transfers have not been United Methodists.”

Building and renovation plans were presented at the October 2019 church conference and the Re-Imagine project was unanimously approved. A groundbreaking service was held Sunday, February 2, and construction began on February 3, 2020. “It’s been really exciting to see it all come together from the visioning, to ideas, to plans, to shovels hitting the ground,” said Apanel.

The Re-Imagine project has started with renovations to and expansion of the existing sanctuary. Worship services are currently being held in the multipurpose room and they hope to return to the sanctuary for Easter services. There will also be renovations and upgrades to the multi-purpose room. “This is not only a space for connection and commitment, but it creates numerous opportunities to connect our community with Jesus through our active banquet and senior ministries,” said Bennett.

A large addition will pave the way for the future of youth and children’s ministries and will provide security from violent intruders. “The proximity of the pre-school, children’s and youth ministries will help us build upon each by ‘feeding’ one into the next — which helps us achieve our vision of connecting,” said Bennett.

Finally, a cover will be built over the main entrance of the church to allow some protection from inclement weather, and the narthex will be expanded to include an office suite, a new welcome center, and plenty of gathering space. They hope to complete the project by August 2020.
In the summer of 2009, the men of the Lake Como and Shehawken United Methodist Churches (Lake Como Charge) in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre district were looking for a project we could work on together. A men’s breakfast was organized where we discussed potential projects. A number of suggestions were made and we agreed to think about each idea for two weeks, then, we had another breakfast to see if we could agree on one project.

The most popular project idea was a clothing drive with a giveaway weekend to distribute free, warm, winter clothing to those in need from our community. The project was inspired by the many summer camps within a 10-mile radius of our churches and their unclaimed lost and found collections, which were willingly donated to our cause.

That first year we set about calling the camps, arranging pickups, laundering clothes, building hanging racks, and advertising locally for clothing donations and the first giveaway weekend. We named it “Coats for Kids” but it was actually clothing for everybody. Our first giveaway was scheduled for mid-October 2009 at Shehawken UMC.

We emptied out the fellowship hall, set up hanging racks and tables filled with clothing, and opened the doors at 9 a.m. on Saturday. By the end of the weekend we had given away most of our inventory. It was an overwhelming success.

We could not have pulled it off without the volunteer efforts of the men and women of both congregations, and it was no surprise that we decided to repeat it again in 2010.

The second year, and every year since, we have had Coats for Kids at the Northern Wayne Fire Hall in Lakewood, Pa., and the members and leaders of the fire company have graciously allowed us to host this community event at their fire hall for free.

Over the years there have been growing pains. We learned a lot about organizing the collections, pre-sorting, laundering, and displaying the donated clothing. We’ve gained a great appreciation for helping those who have been less fortunate than us. All in all, it has been a rewarding ten years since it all began.

Over the years the flow of clothing donations has become continuous throughout the year, all from the simple ads we place in the local papers. We also get enough financial donations each year to purchase hundreds of coats, so we take advantage of end-of-season sales, then store them for the next giveaway. The camps still provide a lot of perfectly good clothing which we begin calling for in early August as the camps prepare to close for the season.

Three years ago we organized a fund drive and raised enough money to purchase a 40-foot, high-bay storage container, which we have placed at Stor Mor storage, directly across the road from the fire hall, where we have our giveaway. For years, the owner of Stor Mor graciously donated storage space for us to store our collected clothing, which is sorted into similar clothing types to make setting up for the giveaway easier. The storage container is a better place to store, sort and access the many bins of clothing we collect.

Coats For Kids has provided a wonderful time of fellowship for our members during one of four annual pre Sorts, donation collections and preparations, setting up the giveaway, enjoying a break for lunch during setup day, and working the giveaway.

To sum it all up, we started with a simple concept to help the local community here in Northern Wayne County. In ten years it has grown into a well-organized event with a relatively consistent flow of clothing and financial donations, coupled the generosity of local camps, newspapers, and the fire company who gives CFK a home every year.

So what is the problem?

After ten years of running CFK, I feel it is time for me to step aside and let someone else lead. Both Como and Shehawken have aging congregations and, while we have many willing volunteers, finding someone to lead and coordinate CFK has been a challenge.

Coats For Kids is a well-established, organized, and funded operation. We will give the keys to the container and all the resources and methods we have successfully used to get it this far. Taking on this mission will bring our churches closer as our members continue to work to see it succeed.
If any individual or congregation has an interest in Coats for Kids and would like to speak to Rick, see the storage container, and/or sit with a few members who have worked on this project since it began, please call Rick Hoff at 570-798-2618.

With the warmer weather, many of us are thinking about our plans for the summer, including summer camp. Last year, Mission Central saw that many kids didn’t have the basic supplies to get through a week of camp. Thus, the Mission Central Camp Kits were created!

Camp Kits provide some of the basic items campers need so they can enjoy camp to the fullest.

The kits include: washcloths, hand towels, toothbrush, toothbrush holder, toothpaste, shampoo, bar of soap, soap holder, comb/pick, bug spray, sunscreen, composition book, pen and pencil. All items are packaged in a re-usable drawstring bag.

Thank you to all who support Mission Central and enable us to keep finding new ways to reach out and assist others. Our established UMCOR and Mission Central Kits are vital, but it’s also inspiring when needs can be seen and we can adapt a kit or create something to reach new people.

Thank you for your continued support and material donations so that we can have those materials on-hand to render the sometimes instantly-needed aid.

For donation information visit missioncentral.org/current-needs/
In 2015, the three Bishops of the United Methodist Church serving in Pennsylvania, leading conferences containing approximately 2,000 churches, made a statement urging our state leaders to pass the Pennsylvania Non-Discrimination Act (Senate & House Bill 300) to protect full equality of LGBT people under the law. Five years later, I stand here on behalf of Bishop Peggy Johnson of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference and Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi of the Western Pennsylvania Conference, to publicly share essentially the same statement, reiterating our call to our state leaders.

Let me read parts of our statement from January 13, 2020:

As bishops of the United Methodist Church in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we urge our state legislators to pass the “Pennsylvania Values Act” (SB 224). It calls our state to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, employment and public accommodations. Pennsylvania remains the only state in the Northeast without these important protections. We believe that when all people are protected from discrimination, our entire community is strengthened with respect and mutual regard.

The United Methodist Social Principles state the following: (I quote) “We support the basic rights of all persons to equal access to housing, education, communication, employment, medical care, legal redress for grievances, and physical protections. We deplore acts of hate or violence against groups of persons based on race, color, national origin, ethnicity, age, gender, disability, status, economic condition, sexual orientation, gender identity or religious affiliations.” (Paragraph 162.III). “Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons.” (end quote) (Paragraph 162.J)

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is often known as the ‘cradle of religious liberty.’ William Penn is quoted as saying, “We must give the liberty we seek.” It was here that religious freedom became a valued principle for American life as we learned to tolerate differences. Religious freedom means we have the right to our own personal beliefs about the moral issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity. It has never been the case that religious freedom has meant that we can restrict another person’s liberty to live as equals in our communities.

We call upon our law makers to recognize and stop the unjust suffering experienced by our LGBT brothers and sisters and act to protect all from harm by passing this bill. It is long overdue and greatly needed at this time filled with polarization and violence.

Let me end by quoting two phrases from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that speak to the reasons we stand here today lending our voices to this cause:

“We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny.”

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Thank you.

Bishop Jeremiah J. Park  SUSUMC
Bishop Peggy Johnson   EPAUMC
Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi WPAUMC
“While the leader was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.” — John Wesley, May 24, 1738

God calls us to tell our story so that others may come to know Jesus Christ. “Hearts Strangely Warmed” was created to share these stories about transformational encounters with the Living God.

God’s Holy Spirit was tugging at my soul. When I think back to how God laid the foundation for me to receive my call, I remember that at the age of five the only gift I desired for Christmas was for my very own Bible so I could know God. When I opened that Christmas gift and saw a deep blue leather Bible with my full name embossed on the front right hand corner in gold lettering all my other presents, one’s that other children would be more apt to play with, were untouched for weeks as my entire focus was centered on God’s Word.

As God prepared my heart, the world called me to question ministry as a viable career. I was in eighth grade and the homework assignment was a report on my future career. It might seem trivial as an adult, but as a thirteen-year-old it was an internal struggle to either do what God laid on my heart or to cave to the values and expectations of the secular society. I caved. I brushed aside my inclination into ministry for another report on a career that was deemed more respectable. As conviction crept in, I spent countless nights praying for well over an hour asking God to guide me in the direction He wanted me to follow.

One night, as I prayed, God answered. With my family fast asleep, I sat in bed praying. It was an ordinary night. I heard the voice of God calling me by name, Joshua. Instead of fear, I felt an unexplainable peace pass over me. My anxieties and wonderings of the future ceased. My entire attention was centered on being present with God. God takes shy and backwards individuals and uses them to proclaim the Gospel.

My call into ministry began when I was only five years old. I did not know I was being called into ministry, but called me to speak truth, even when others would shun it, and revive the hearts of the people—to bring a great awakening so people can experience new life in Christ. In addition to my belief in Christ, my calling into ministry has kept me grounded when life seems chaotic.

After accepting my call at age thirteen, my life changed. God opened doors for me when the doors should have been closed. God opened opportunities when I did not know those opportunities existed. God took a shy teenager who talked too fast when he got nervous and gave me peace and assurance to proclaim God’s Word to whoever will listen.

Joshua was ordained as an Elder at the 2019 Susquehanna Annual Conference.
Happy Anniversary!

It’s almost been one year since we changed our name to Seedling Financial Ministry and what an amazing year it’s been!

We have had significant software upgrades that have allowed us to offer online access to our individual investors with access for churches beginning in April.

We’ve also introduced a new investment, our Savings Certificate, which is a liquid account and can be combined with our automatic savings plan to help meet your savings goals.

We have had many new investments, as well as an increasing number of rollovers. With those investments, we were able to help six churches with loans to acquire property, renovate church buildings, purchase parsonages, refinance existing loans and repair church property. We were also able to celebrate with five churches who have paid off their loans!

When you invest or repay your loan through Seedling you are gaining so much more than interest! You are gaining the satisfaction of knowing that your investment/loan payment is directly affecting thousands of people through our lending program. That is something you can believe in!

Your Investment at Work

Otterbein UMC in Mount Wolf is a vibrant church that supports numerous ministries, locally, nationally and globally. Their church provides an early education center as well as an after-school program. In addition, Otterbein Church is the location for the only Senior Center in their local community. The church also operates a separate youth center in which they currently offer weekly outreach days to kids at the local school.

Otterbein had a high interest-rate debt that they wanted to reduce and came to Seedling Financial Ministry for guidance. We were able to offer them a loan that had a significantly lower interest rate thus lowering their monthly payments.

With the money they are saving they can increase their support of various missions, such as Sierra Leone, McCurdy, Red Bird Mission, UMCOR, local food banks, JoyEl, Moms in Prayer and Heart to Honduras to name a few.

Otterbein UMC is just one of the many churches that your investment is helping!
Art and Gwyn Montgomery met in elementary school and were both in the band together at Selinsgrove High School. After high school, they both went away to different colleges. During summer break, Art returned to Selinsgrove and arranged to meet with Gwyn. They married in 1970 and will celebrate 50 years of marriage this year!

Art and Gwyn both attended Garrett Theological Seminary in Illinois. Gwyn has a Christian Education degree and Art received a Master of Divinity degree. In 1973, they were assigned to oversee five small United Methodist churches in Benton. They stayed there for four years before they were assigned to Lewisberry for six years and then it was on to Tyrone. Next, they moved to Millerstown and eventually Shermans Dale. Art and Gwyn retired in 2010 and moved to RiverWoods Senior Living Community in 2018.

Even though they were retired, Art continued to serve as a pastor in Middleburg for 18 months and then in New Berlin for two years, assisting pastors who were ill. Art also still serves as a mentor for area pastors.

Art and Gwyn both love music and played for many years in the Greenwood Community Band and the Sunbury City Band. They are now also joining the Selinsgrove Adult Band. Art is part of a musical group called “Three’s Company Trio. The trio visits senior living communities and performs live music. They also visit nursing homes, senior centers and local churches to perform.

Art served as the president of the board of directors for Selinsgrove Meals on Wheels for six years. He and Gwyn both visit “The Soup Place” in Sunbury to serve meals to the needy on Thursday evenings. They serve between 40 to 80 people at a time, and have been doing that for about three years.

At RiverWoods they enjoy helping to bring nursing home residents to Sunday church services on campus. Art explained, “I think both she and I find the time we spend with them on a Sunday morning extremely rewarding and the best part of our day. We do a lot of joking around with them and get them to smile. You try to learn who these people were before they came to the nursing home. We just really enjoy listening to their stories. We sing songs with them and talk with them.”

They also love to bring their dog Dodger to the nursing home to visit with the residents. Gwyn said, “They love to pet him and he jumps into their lap to make it easier for them to reach him. He enjoys it as much as they do!”

Art and Gwyn Montgomery are a shining example of being called to serve, and Albright is proud that they are part of our family. Albright invites you to continue your mission by joining us at one of our six locations. Visit albrightcare.org for information on senior living, day programs, giving or volunteering.
Earlier this year Bishop Park announced that he will retire at the end of August, 2020. Knowing that he will be leaving this annual conference allows us to set in motion a committee to specifically plan the transitions of Episcopal leaders.

One question the committee asked itself is, “What does our conference get a retiring Bishop?” There are many fine answers to that question, but as we thought about it, one thing really stood out…The Bishop’s Partners in Mission (BPIM).

Bishop Park started The Bishop’s Partners in Mission fund in the Susquehanna Conference soon after he arrived. As we all know, our Bishop has a heart for people. The goal of BPIM is to help as many people as possible by pooling our money because, truly, we are Better Together! His goal was for every congregation and as many individuals as possible to work together to make a difference in the lives of others to show them the love of Jesus Christ.

When thinking about how BPIM could help, two causes came to mind: debt reduction for Mission Central and the United Methodist Church’s Imagine No Malaria campaign. The money given to BPIM is split evenly between those two causes (unless otherwise denoted by the giver.)

Mission Central is a ministry that works tirelessly in “Connecting God’s Resources with Human Need.” The warehouse is an inspiring place and touching “God Moments” happen there every day. Stories told by the staff and volunteers are truly amazing and you can almost see the hand of God setting people and things in the right place at the right time. Mission Central has a unique chance to be a visual and tangible representation of the love of God to so many, both locally and globally. The warehouse was and is essential to the ministry, which is why debt was taken on to secure its location. Eliminating that debt will free up even more resources for its ministry. It is time to free Mission Central from debt!

Imagine No Malaria was a campaign started in 2010 by the United Methodist Church to raise $75 Million dollars to fight malaria in sub-Saharan Africa, where a child died every thirty seconds from the disease. The global mortality rate from malaria has decreased because of the significant resources given for prevention and education; however, while deaths have been reduced, the reality is that support of programs to fight this deadly disease have plateaued. We must remain vigilant so we can eradicate this disease and make sure no one else loses their loved ones to malaria.

Since its inception, over $970,000 has been given in second-mile giving to BPIM! What a gift it would be to Bishop Park for that number to grow to over a million dollars and beyond before his retirement! YOU can help us with that! Please consider giving a donation to BPIM, individually or as a church, in honor of Bishop Park as he retires.

To give to BPIM in honor of our Bishop’s retirement, please write a check made payable to the Susquehanna Conference and put “7090 – BPIM Bishop’s Retirement” in the memo line and mail it to the attention of the SUSUMC Finance Department, 303 Mulberry Dr., Mechanicsburg, PA 17050. You may also bring it to a reception for Bishop Park being held at Annual Conference. (NOTE: this farewell gift is separate from any offering received during Annual Conference worship services). If your church is sending the gift, please have the Treasurer record it on the remittance report on the BPIM line and write on it “Bishop’s Retirement”. Any questions can be directed to Christy Mackey at cmackey@susumc.org.

Thank you for helping us to give a retirement gift to Bishop Park that will, in turn, change the lives of so many others as we work together to show the love of Christ to the world!
Women’s Spiritual Growth Resources

This month we are featuring resources designed especially for women. These are great studies for a women’s weekly small group or a women’s retreat.

Broken and Blessed, by Jessica LaGrone.
Subtitled “How God Used One Imperfect Family to Change the World,” this study is a journey through Genesis, telling the story of one perfectly imperfect family -- from Adam and Eve all the way to Joseph and his brothers. Despite their brokenness, God chose to love and bless this family so that their blessings might overflow. As you experience this study, you’ll discover that when God wants to change the world, He starts with a family; when God wants to change a family, He starts with one person. You will be challenged to be the change agent in your own family. And you will know with confidence that every family can be used by God to bring blessing in a hurting and broken world. (6 sessions. Includes DVD, preview book, leader guide, and participant workbook.)

Church of the Small Things: Making a Difference Right Where You Are, by Melanie Shankle. In this humorous and honest video Bible study, Melanie Shankle offers you the opportunity to embrace what it means to live an abundant and meaningful life by finding beauty and laughter in all the small things right beneath the surface of every moment of your life. (6 sessions. Includes DVD and study guide.)

Elijah: Spiritual Stamina in Every Season, by Melissa Spoelstra. Life is like a roller-coaster -- great days and not-so-great days. We need spiritual stamina in order to keep going through all the ups and downs. Elijah did too. In this study grounded in First and Second Kings, Melissa Spoelstra leads us in examining the life of the prophet Elijah, an ordinary man who did extraordinary things for God in the midst of the highs and lows of life. (6 sessions. Includes DVD, book, leader guide, and devotional prayer guide.)

It's Not Supposed to Be This Way, by Lysa Terkeurst. Subtitled “Finding Unexpected Strength When Disappointments Leave You Shattered,” the author invites us into her own journey of faith and, with grit, vulnerability, and honest humor, helps us to see our lives in the context of God’s bigger story. Whether we’re dealing with daily disappointments or life-altering loss, we can find unexpected strength as we learn what it means to wrestle well between our faith and our feelings. (6 sessions. Includes DVD, leader’s guide in box with DVD, study guide, and hardcover book.)

Breathe: Making Room for Sabbath, by Priscilla Shirer. You need some breathing room. With a jam-packed life, what's missing is space - space for God to speak, room for you to hear. It’s time to set aside the activities and busyness that swallows up rest and peace. It’s time for us to breathe and build margin into our lives for God. Join Priscilla Shirer and discover Sabbath margin - the boundary God enables us to put around things we enjoy so that we never become slaves again. (5 sessions. Includes 2 DVDs with the lessons plus bonus features, and a study journal.)

Uninvited: Living Loved When You Feel Less Than, Left Out, and Lonely, by Lysa Terkeurst. In this video Bible study, the author digs deep into God’s Word to help you identify the roots of rejection, overcome the damage past hurts can inflict on your relationships today, and fully grasp what it looks like to live loved. With biblical depth, gut-honest vulnerability, and refreshing wit, Lysa will take you on a visual journey in the Holy Land to experience Scripture like you never have before. Each teaching is presented in a unique location that will speak to the most sacred parts of your soul. (6 sessions. Includes DVD, study guide, and book.)

When God Doesn’t Fix It: Learning to Walk in God’s Plans Instead of Our Own, by Laura Story. Is it possible that good things can come out of our broken dreams? Laura Story’s life took an unexpected turn when her husband, Martin, was diagnosed with a brain tumor. The news brought Laura’s dreams of a fairy-tale life to an end. Yet it also brought her a deeper intimacy with God as she turned to Him and allowed Him to rewrite her story. Laura shows that while God may not fix every broken thing in our lives, He will lead us to a place where we are better because of it. (5 sessions. Includes DVD, study guide, and book.)

Discovery Place also has numerous studies by Beth Moore, and you can check them out in our online catalog by searching by author Beth Moore.

It is very easy to place an order through Discovery Place! Visit our website, www.discovery-place.org and place an order through our online catalog, send me an email at discovery@susumc.org, or give me a call at 717.766.7968. We are open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9 am – 1 pm. I’d love to help you find the perfect resource for your group!

Susquehanna Conference
303 Mulberry Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
717-766-7968
E-mail discovery@susumc.org
Web www.discovery-place.org

Open 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Mon, Wed, Fri.

JONI ROBISON
Preaching with Vulnerability

Monday, March 23, 2020
Trinity UMC
84 Lombard Ave., Danville
9 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.
Cost: $25 includes refreshments, lunch, materials, and 0.5 CEUs.

An Equipping Event for Pastors and Laypersons
Rev. Jacob Armstrong, founding pastor of Providence Church in Mt. Juliet, TN will share about the Providence story, an overall philosophy/approach to ministry and preaching, along with their preaching process.
Jacob is the author of several books published by Abingdon Press, including Renovate, The God Story, The New Adapters and Interruptions.
Registration Deadline is March 16.
Register by emailing Debbie Ackley at lewisburg@susumc.org

It’s Gala Time!

Saturday, March 28, 2020
It’s hard to believe that the Annual Mission Central Gala is just weeks away! Please mark your calendar for March 28, 2020.
To purchase tickets online, please use this link.
If you would like to support Gala in other ways, please consider:
• Making a basket to be auctioned. (You can donate a whole basket or even parts of a basket.) Here are a few ideas.
• Sponsoring Gala. We have great sponsorship packages available from $500-$10,000 that are perfect for churches, organizations or individuals.
• Placing an ad. For $150-$500, this is great to promote your business, your church services or even to celebrate an important personal milestone.
• Donating an item for our live/silent auction.
• Promoting the event! Share our event on your Facebook page, your organization’s social media or your church’s social media.
• Buying a table. Tables are available for $500 (8 seats) and a great way for your friends and coworkers to learn about Mission Central while having a great time!
If you have any questions, please reach out to Stephanie at Mission Central - 717.766.1533, x118 or stitzel@susumc.org.
Thank you for your ongoing support!

Events
Special
Sundays
Continuing Education for United Methodist Clergy & Leaders
Ongoing
Check out the online Continuing Education courses for UMC Clergy at clergyeducation.com
All classes are one hour in length. A CEU certificate is sent to each participant following the session.
The fee for each class is $25. Clergy who can’t attend a webinar at the scheduled time can receive a video of the session by registering for the class. A recorded video is sent to each registrant.

UMCOR Sunday
March 22, 2020
Life sometimes can be overwhelming
www.umcgiving.org/how-we-give#sundays

Mission Central Gala
March 28, 2020
See information at right.

Native American Ministry Sunday
April 26, 2020
Together, we empower local spiritual development and educate Native American seminary students to serve God faithfully.
www.umcgiving.org/how-we-give#sundays

2020 Susquehanna Annual Conference
May 28-30, 2020
Hershey Lodge & Convention Center
www.susumc.org/annual-conference/

Lead With Your STRENGTHS
YPMC 2020 Retreat
April 24 - April 26, 2020
Wesley Forest Camp & Retreat Center - Welkert, Pa.
The Young People’s Ministry Council (YPMC) is hosting a weekend leadership training retreat for students, grades 8-12, who are interested in developing their leadership skills! Games, Worship, Learning Opportunities, and great food will be part of our weekend experience.
For more information visit tinyurl.com/s4n8zvu

Connecting God’s Resources with Human Need
Safe Sanctuaries Training

Thank you to all churches who have logged into MinistrySafe and are utilizing it to track the needed basic Safe Sanctuaries training and clearances for staff and volunteers to serve children and youth within our conference.

It has been part of our Safe Sanctuaries policy that all church staff and children & youth volunteers are required to take Safe Sanctuaries training when they first start in ministry and every five years thereafter. As of January 1, this course will ONLY be offered online through MinistrySafe.

Procedures for obtaining clearances themselves have not changed and they can be accessed through our website https://susumc.org/safe-sanctuaries/

This is overwhelming, where should I begin? It doesn’t all have to be done overnight. Start with your new staff and volunteers and those needing to renew their training and clearances.

Get them loaded into the system, let them take the training and load their old and new clearances into the system one by one. Within five years, you will have your entire church online.

If you are a large church with many staff & volunteers and have not yet accessed your account, please contact the conference office at 717-766-7441 ext 3600 or by email safesanctuaries@susumc.org.

Please contact safesanctuaries@susumc.org with any questions.
Thank You.
AC2020 Care Kit Challenge

Now through AC2020

Between now and the 2020 session of Annual Conference, to be held at Hershey Lodge, May 28-30, churches in all seven districts are each being asked to collect one item (see list below) which is used to make up Mission Central Care Kits. Churches are then asked to send those items with their pastor and/or lay member to Annual Conference. During Annual Conference, participants will have the opportunity to assemble those care kits – which will then be distributed through our partners at Mission Central and UMCOR.

**Altoona District**
adult-size washcloths

**Harrisburg District**
¾ - 1 inch wide adhesive bandages, banded together in groups of 6

**Lewisburg District:**
hand towels, good quality, preferably 15x25 - 17x27 inches in size

**Scranton/Wilkes-Barre District**
new toothbrushes, which should be left in original, individual packaging

**State College District**
new combs, preferably those which are sturdy and have 6 inches of teeth

**Williamsport District**
bath-size soap bars, 3 oz or larger, in original packaging. No Ivory or Jergen’s soap, please

**York District**
toenail or fingernail clippers

There are over 800 churches in the Susquehanna Annual Conference, and we would love to assemble at least one care kit for each church to reflect the power we have when we come together. To reach this goal, each district is challenged to collect 1,000 of its designated items and see what God can do when we act as one with each other in ministry to all the world.

Click Here for more information about the awards, deadlines, and who to contact.

Consider nominating someone for a 2020 Conference Award – deadlines are April 3, 2020 unless otherwise specified.
Mental Health First Aid Training

Late Spring 2020

Every year the congregations of the Susquehanna Annual Conference are asked to receive a special Mental Health offering in May. The funds are used to sponsor educational events throughout the Conference, helping us to be in ministry with families and individuals who are experiencing a mental health problem. For the past several years, we have been able to provide Mental Health First Aid training, an 8-hour course which teaches “the skills to respond to the signs of mental illness and substance use.”

We want to offer a training sometime this year in a central location in the Conference. The training is limited to a maximum of 30 participants. We are considering late spring for the training, but the date and place will be determined when we know who would be interested in participating. The training costs $30, which covers the manual and meals.

The training is open to laity and clergy. Please contact Evelyn Madison at emadison@susumc.org by March 8th if you are interested in participating in MHFA training.

If you are aware of specific needs in your community and would like a different, less intensive training on a particular topic, please let us know.

AND, please support the Mental Health offering this May!

CHURCHWIDE SPECIAL SUNDAYS
Bring Churches Together

UMCOR Sunday
March 22, 2020
Gifts to UMCOR Sunday lay the foundation for all United Methodist Committee on Relief work by covering the costs of doing business. This means all contributions designated to specific programs can go 100 percent to those programs because UMCOR’s basic expenses are covered.

United Methodist Student Day
November 29, 2020
Gifts to the United Methodist Student Day offering help deserving United Methodist students continue their education and their faith journeys as they strive to make a difference in the world and discern what God has called them to do.

Peace with Justice Sunday
June 7, 2020
Gifts on Peace with Justice Sunday fund programs that advocate for peace and justice in the United States and around the world. These programs empower United Methodists to speak out for removing structures and systems that harm God’s children globally.

World Communion Sunday
October 4, 2020
The World Communion Sunday offering funds graduate racial-ethnic World Communion Scholarships, with at least half of the annual amount reserved for ministries beyond the United States. Donations also provide for undergraduate U.S. Ethnic Scholarship and Ethnic In-Service Training programs.

Native American Ministries Sunday
April 26, 2020
The Native American Ministries Sunday offering supports Native American outreach within annual conferences, provides seminary scholarships for Native Americans, and strengthens, develops, and equips Native American rural, urban and reservation congregations, ministries and communities.

United Methodists striped for Peace

The Mission of the Susquehanna Conference is to equip local churches to fulfill their mission as we...

with each other and the world

equip

Spiritual, transformational leaders

connect

Congregations for vitality and create new places for new people

Grow

So that, Alive in Christ together, the Susquehanna Conference will embody the beloved community of disciple-making congregations.

UMCgiving.org/SS
God’s Mission, Our Mission

“Compelled by Christ to be a voice of conscience on behalf of the people called United Methodist, UMCOR works globally to alleviate human suffering and advance hope and healing.”

God’s Holy Spirit calls the Church into being for mission. The Church experiences and engages in God’s mission as it pours itself out for others, ready to cross every boundary to call for true human dignity among all peoples. As Jesus said: ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ (Matthew 25:40)

UMCOR, The United Methodist Committee on Relief, takes this call to heart. As the humanitarian relief and development arm of The United Methodist Church, UMCOR is the hands and feet of Jesus whenever and wherever disaster strikes.

In 1940, Bishop Herbert Welch, representing the Methodist Committee for China Relief, proposed the creation of the "Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief (MCOR)," in response to displaced and vulnerable populations in the wake of World War II. Welch commented that MCOR would serve as a “voice of conscience among Methodists to act in the relief of human suffering without distinction of race, color or creed.” This mandate remains true to this day.

MCOR grew from providing necessities to refugees and displaced populations, to getting involved in reconstruction, rehabilitation and repatriation of refugees and prisoners of war, restoration of churches and civil operations, and reconciliation – an effort to restore peace and goodwill.

When the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Methodist Church united into The United Methodist Church in 1968, MCOR became UMCOR. – The United Methodist Committee on Overseas Relief.

Later, UMCOR expanded its scope to include agricultural and community development projects, as well as medical relief and development, and disaster risk reduction programs.

No one in 1940 could have foreseen the depths and breadth of what UMCOR is today.

The transformative work of UMCOR is categorized into three areas: Humanitarian Relief/Disaster Response, Sustainable Development, and Global Health.

People around the world now know the transformative power of Christ through the action of first responders and volunteers of UMCOR. Their vision is to come together to strengthen and transform people and communities.

UMCOR has responded and provided aid in Jesus’ name when tornadoes ripped through Oklahoma, when children in Zimbabwe lost parents to AIDS, and when a massive tsunami devastated lives in Japan. UMCOR is currently supporting several relief efforts. After Hurricane Dorian ripped through Puerto Rico and destructive earthquakes shook the island, UMCOR responded to address urgent needs, provide shelter and supplies, and reach out to those in need. UMCOR continues to support wildfire relief and recovery efforts in California and is still active in the efforts to recover from Hurricanes Michael, Florence, Maria, Harvey, and Irma.

Internationally, UMCOR is assisting with relief efforts after flooding in the Philippines and wildfires in Australia. It continues to provide for the basic human needs of the victims of Cyclone Idai in Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique and earthquake and tsunami victims in Indonesia.

Today, many serve and donate to UMCOR so that we may become even more involved in God’s mission, our mission. We pray constantly for God’s grace to be made known through us as we provide sustainable, practical and purposeful relief to those in need around the globe.

Did you know, when you donate to support a specific relief or recovery effort, every dollar will go the project you specify. To accomplish this, UMCOR uses other funding channels to cover non-program related activities such administrative overhead or communications. One source of that type of funding is the UMCOR Sunday offering. Your prayers, support and generosity enable UMCOR to respond when disaster strikes and be the last to leave. Together, WE ARE UMCOR. And, our efforts are rebuilding hope in the lives of those in need all over the world.

There are many ways to support the work of UMCOR and the SUSUMC Disaster Response Ministry, including praying, giving, and volunteering. To support ongoing efforts, consider a financial gift.

For congregations, offerings can be collected and submitted through the Conference Treasurer’s Remittance Report in Section A and mailed to the Conference Office. Checks should be made payable to the Susquehanna Conference, with the designation for the appropriate Advance: UMCOR US Disaster Response and Recovery (Advance #901670) or UMCOR International Disaster Response and Recovery (Advance #982450). If you wish to allow UMCOR to determine where to use the funds, the offering can be designated “Where Most Needed” (Advance #999895).

For individual giving, these same options are available and can be accomplished online by CLICKING HERE: https://www.umcmission.org/umcor/give/how-to-give#Your_Gift

The Susquehanna Conference Disaster Response Ministry Advance (Advance #8055) provides another opportunity to support disaster response. Funds designated to this Advance will support response and relief efforts within the Conference as well as support Conference teams when they mobilize to other areas.

For more information about UMCOR, visit www.umcmission.org/umcor.

To learn more about the SUSUMC Disaster Response Ministry, visit http://www.susmb.org/ and click on the disaster response tab; or follow on Facebook: @SUSDrawingResponse and Twitter: @UMCDisasterResp

For more information about UMCOR, visit www.umcmission.org/umcor.
UMCOR SUNDAY
(Formerly One Great Hour of Sharing)

Through your generous gift today, you share the goodness of life with those who hurt.

UMCOR SPECIALIZES IN SOLUTIONS THAT HELP PEOPLE BECOME SELF-RELIANT

Sunday March 22, 2020

Please make check payable to your local church or give online at UMCgiving.org/giveUMCOR
NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY

Through your generous gift today, you empower and support Native American seminarians.

Sunday April 26, 2020

“I boldly told the bishop, I can help the church become self-sufficient and develop Native leadership.”

– The Rev. Calvin Hill, Blackfeet United Methodist Parish, Browning, Montana

The people of The United Methodist Church®

Please make your check payable to your local church or give online at www.umcgiving.org/givenams
Providing Summer Camp & Retreat Experiences for All Ages

Experience:
• Authentic Relationships
• Connection to Creation
• Loving Hospitality
• Lifelong Memories

Susquehanna Conference
Camp & Retreat Ministry

FIVE CAMP & RETREAT CENTERS
Camp Penn  Greene Hills  Mount Asbury  Wesley Forest  Sky Lake

Susumcamps.org

Join us for a renewing weekend of quilting, fellowship, creative inspiration, fresh air, and a cozy and comfortable workspace. We invite you to bring your own sewing supplies and project, as you work at your own relaxed pace, and glean sewing techniques from one another.

God’s Daughters Spring Retreat

March 19-22, 2020
at Wesley Forest
for Women Ages 18+

$200/3 Nights
Starts: Thursday 10 a.m.
or
$175/2 Nights
Starts: Friday 10 a.m.
Both and at 2 p.m. on Sunday

March 20-22, 2020
at Greene Hills Manor Lodge
for Women Age 18+

$125/full event
or
$75/commuter
No Early Bird

Starts: Friday 7:30 p.m.
Ends at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday

We invite women of all ages and all walks of life to experience this weekend retreat where you can get away and truly relax! We’ll join together in conversation, worship, quiet time, Bible study, games, and laughter with fellow believers as we relate to one another as women.

Susumcamps.org/register

Susumcamps.org/register
March – 100 years ago

The 52nd annual session of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church convened March 17-22, 1920, at Stevens Memorial Church in Harrisburg. The 18th Amendment having just gone into effect in January, the report of the Conference Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals stated: “Rejoicing in the fact that we have won the greatest victory that the world has ever known, we must understand that we cannot sit down and fold our arms and feel that the work is done. Duties are not ended with the adoption of the amendment to the Constitution of the United States closing the saloons forever in our nation. Proper laws must be made to make the amendment effective. To do this will require earnest work and courage on the part of all temperance people.”

The first church building at the conference site was dedicated in 1873 as Mount Pleasant, and later re-named Thirteenth Street. The name Stevens Memorial was adopted when the present sanctuary was dedicated in 1909. With 1403 members in 1920, Stevens Memorial was the conference’s largest membership church. In 2004 the building was transferred to Stevens Emmanuel UMC, an Hispanic ministry, and in 2013 the church was closed and the building sold.

April – 50 years ago

The April 1970 United Methodist monthly publication of the former Wyoming Conference included the following local church news item: “The first major alterations and improvements in a century are now in progress at Gibson, Pa. The church celebrated its centennial June 15, 1969. A basement is being dug under the entire church and there are plans for Sunday School rooms, a dining room and kitchen facilities. The church was built in 1868 and dedicated June 3, 1869.”

The April 1970 issue of The Link of the former Central Pennsylvania Conference included an article titled “Help Needed on Hill” encouraging good Pennsylvania United Methodists everywhere to urge their elected representatives to defeat proposed bills that would (1) establish a state lottery, (2) permit the Sunday sales of liquor, (3) permit the sale of beer in grocery stores. Eventually, however, Pennsylvania followed the lead of other states and authorized a state lottery in 1971, Sunday sales of liquor in 2002, and sales of beer in grocery stores in 2016.
Rev. Thomas E. Adams, Jr., of Middleburg, Pa., Retired Elder, died Saturday, February 15, 2020 at his home. Among his survivors is his wife, Shirley J. Adams. Obituary.


Mrs. Gladys Eichelberger of Lewisburg Pa., widow of Rev. Vernon R. Eichelberger, died on Friday, January 31, 2020 at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville. Obituary.


Susquehanna Conference
The United Methodist Church

Better Together
One with Each Other